

any rational discussion of the question. It is absolutely right to measure libraries by performance rather than by size, but performance criteria for libraries differ according to their function.

There is no doubt about the tremendous importance and urgency of library restriction. This book is a major contribution to librarianship in that it is one of the first to ask questions hitherto thought improper and to suggest unpalatable answers. If its overall quality leaves something to be desired, good though individual papers are, the significance of the book is unquestionable.

Its appearance slightly predates a report of the UK University Grants Committee,⁷ on the need to control library growth because of the shortage of capital for new buildings—a report of which the impact has yet to be felt. I hope it will be followed by more systematic analyses, related to different types of library, and above all by reports of carefully monitored practical experience in libraries following some of the principles advocated. Librarianship is after all a practical matter, and a gram of experience is worth a kilogram of theory.—*Maurice B. Line, Director General, British Library Lending Division, Boston Spa, England.*

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The Sourcebook of Library Technology: A Cumulative Edition of Library Technology Reports, 1965-1975. 1976 ed. Chicago: American Library Assn., 1976. Iv. (loose-leaf) with 30 fiche in pockets. \$50.00 (ISBN 0-8389-5469-3)

During this year of the U.S. Bicentennial, a reader may easily overlook the completion of a single decade of one library publication project, the *Library Technology Reports (LTR)*. Prepared by the ALA, which itself is celebrating a century of notable existence, the *LTR* is a significant accomplishment and has been fully appreciated by any librarian in need of advice in selecting library equipment.

Throughout its ten years of existence, the *LTR* has offered a number of objective and clearly presented reports and evaluations on many library products, systems, and services. As its editors point out, the financing of all the publication's operations has been exclusively from its subscriptions, making the *LTR* independent of any commercial influence. Simultaneously, close cooperation with competent, national laboratories has produced reports with very high technical standards, thus quickly turning the *LTR* into the librarian's version of the *Consumer Reports*.

As to format, the original loose-leaf reports soon evolved into a bulky, eleven-volume set, creating some problems for maintenance and use. Beginning with the 1976 volume, the overall format of the publication has changed. Now, the reports (*LTR*) are being published bimonthly in a noncumulative book format and are supplemented by an annually edited compilation, called *The Sourcebook of Library Technology (SLT)*, published in part on microfiche.

The first issue of the new *LTR* is a 132-page, softbound book, offering as its major feature a comprehensive evaluation of the OCLC system. The first *SLT*, issued at the same time, is an edited compilation of surveys and reports published in the *LTR* between 1965 and 1975. The printed *Sourcebook* is issued in a three-ring, loose-leaf binder and contains a title page, subscription information, an introduction, an instruction "how to use the Sourcebook," a table of contents, and an eleven-page in-

dex. The thirty microfiche are stored in reinforced fiche pockets in this *SLT*.

The filming quality of the text is excellent with the exception of one or two frames found in the reviewer's copy. At the normal 24x level of reduction, the print, tables, and diagrams are very legible and are arranged in an easy-to-follow, standard sequence of rows and columns. For quick retrieval, the title of each fiche is printed in large-size characters at its heading. The table of contents also provides the actual location on the fiche for each group of entries.

As indicated in the introduction, *SLT* excludes "Abstracts," "Library Technology News," and "New Products" sections of the original *LTR. The Sourcebook* has combined or revised some introductory reports, omitting the products, services, and systems no longer available. The names and addresses of the manufacturers and distributors, as well as the model numbers of the products listed in the *SLT*, have been updated whenever possible. Prices, however, have been left as originally printed. Hence, some caution is needed in the use of these data.

Table 1 summarizes the extent and recency of the evaluations contained in the current *SLT* edition.

The 420 entries in this edition of the *SLT* consist of some introductory comments (close to 9 percent of all entries), reports on individual products (86 percent of all reports), and a "Questions and Answers" section (the remaining 5 percent of the entries). Over one-third of all evaluations in the *SLT* are on the subject of "Furniture and Shelving." Chairs are the most thoroughly reviewed individual item, not only in this section (52 percent of the "Furniture and Shelving" section's entries), but also in the entire compilation (19 percent of all products reviewed).

Desks and filing cabinets were each the topics of roughly 13 percent of all reports in this section, with shelving, book trucks, microform cabinets, and study carrels completing the items of evaluation of furniture and shelving. "Miscellaneous equipment and supplies" is the second largest section (27.6 percent of all reports), with 57 percent of its reports dealing with typewriters and their auxiliary equipment and 35 per-

TABLE 1
ESTIMATED NUMBER OF ITEMS EVALUATED^o IN *The Sourcebook of Library Technology, 1976 Edition*

Category of Items Reviewed	Number of Evaluations Published in Each Year									Nos	Percent		
	1965	1966	1967	1968	1969	1970	1971	1972	1973			1974	1975
1. Audiovisual Equipment				1	6	10		8	8		8	41	9.8%
2. Book Theft Detection Systems†				1					1		1	1	0.2
3. Cataloging‡	6	2	1			2					8	18	4.3
4. Circulation Systems		5	8	1	2	8		33	39	20	6	9	2.2
5. Equipment and Supplies, Miscellaneous												116	27.6
6. Furniture and Shelving§		3		1	9	9		21	22	43	35	154	36.7
7. Microforms and Equipment§		1	4	4	1	4		5	10	12	12	58	13.8
8. Standards, Lighting										1	1	1	0.2
9. Questions and Answers		1			3			4	5	4	5	22	5.2
Total Number of Reviews	6	12	13	8	21	33	26	61	85	81	74	420	
Percent of Total	1.4	2.9	3.1	1.9	5.0	7.9	6.2	14.5	20.2	19.3	17.6		100.0%

^o An item is defined as one introductory comment, or an individual brand tested separately.

[†] The individual reports incorporated discussions of 11 book theft detection systems.

[‡] The individual reports incorporated discussions of 42 different types of catalog cards.

[§] The individual reports incorporated discussions of 162 manufacturers and distributors of the equipment.

cent dealing with photocopying equipment. The most frequently evaluated items in the remaining sections are: (1) microform readers (72 percent of the reports in the "Microform and Equipment" section), (2) projectors (53 percent of all AV reviews), and (3) catalog card duplicators (50 percent of all reports in the "Catalog" section).

Twenty percent of all evaluations were published in 1973; while the last four years (1972-75) contained 71 percent of all reports. The oldest, 1965 reviews all discussed items in the "Catalog" section (i.e., one-third of all reports in that section are ten years old).

An interesting comment on the changing technical, and perhaps to some extent also social, milieu can be suggested by the kind of products reviewed for the first time in the last three years. In 1975, catalog cards and microfilm stock; in 1974, book theft detection systems, study carrels, and lighting standards; and in 1973, graffiti removers, book trucks, and microfilm rejuvenation were the items introduced in the *LTR* evaluations.

The scope of the evaluations indicated in Table 1 is impressive. Yet, one may wish to learn more about the criteria used in the selection of products for review. The original *LTR*, for example, provided headings but no reviews for adhesives and floor covering; consequently, neither of these topics is listed or discussed in the current *SLT*. Are the omissions dictated by the lack of interest in the products, the difficulty of testing them, or simply by different priorities?

The actual use of the microfiche in the *SLT* is much less burdensome than some proponents of a book format might anticipate. The ease of consulting the *Sourcebook* can perhaps be made even more efficient if the editors would consider some minor modifications in the future editions of this publication. Perhaps the most important is a need to indicate which of the reviews have been updated, or even removed in the microfiche edition of the reports. The present cumulation lacks such information.

A more elaborate printed table of contents might considerably speed up access to the information located on the microfiche. Such an enlarged outline could list

individual products, together with dates of their evaluations.

The printed index does not include the titles of reports or the names of the companies evaluating the products. Thus, for example, neither the title of the report, "Swivel Arm Chairs," nor its author, Buyers Laboratory, Inc., is included in the index; although all models are listed by brands tested under the group heading, "Chairs, Swivel Arm." A similar list of all items discussed in each section, filmed at the beginning of each unit, would be appreciated by some users. At present, a searcher looking for an evaluation of the Graflex SM-1000 model, for instance, must scan the whole row A of the fiche, before locating that report in row B2-4. By the way, a less experienced searcher might have difficulties locating this material, if he does not know that the item is indexed under "Projectors, Film-strip/Slide." The product is not listed in the index under its own name.

Obviously, the index is well designed for the user, searching under the type of equipment or service; it is more difficult to use by one who wants a quick access to the data on a specific product.

The arrangement of various reports within more or less arbitrary headings is at times confusing. Thus, the section on standards is limited exclusively to lighting standards, while binding standards are referred to in the binding unit of the "Equipment and Supplies, Miscellaneous" section, and also in the "Questions and Answers" section. The section on "Microform and Equipment" does not include reviews of microform storage cabinets; they are listed instead as "cabinets" in the section "Furniture and Shelving."

Most of the information contained in the "Questions and Answers" section would probably be more useful if arranged under specific headings, such as review of different vacuum cleaners under "Equipment and Supplies, Miscellaneous," or a discussion of manual circulation systems in the section "Circulation Systems." The editors partly responded to this problem by listing the content of the section in the index, but under "Questions and Answers."

And finally two very minor issues: (1) the printed indexes will undoubtedly be used very heavily; hence a reinforcement

of the holes in those indexes might prevent premature retirement, and (2) an added statement indicating the "End of Study" would be of value, especially when the last page of such a study is filmed on the last frame of a given fiche.

All in all, the *LTR* and its *Sourcebook* are outstanding contributions to library technical literature and excellent candidates for the ALA's centennial best-seller. For larger libraries, requiring reliable and most recent information about library equipment, supplies, and services, the bimonthly *LTR* is almost indispensable, in spite of its \$100 subscription tag. The annual cumulation of the *SLT*, at half this price, is the second best solution. Most probably, the purchase of the *Sourcebook* in addition to the *LTR* subscription, will depend to a large degree on the extent and thoroughness of its editorial updates.

The critical consideration about any good service is not the fact that it costs, but the conviction that it pays. The *LTR* series is now accessible to practically all library budgets—paying many times over the initial cost of its subscription.—Joseph Z. Nitecki, *Temple University Libraries*.

Annual Review of Information Science and Technology. Volume 10, 1975. Carlos A. Cuadra, Editor. Ann W. Luke, Associate Editor. Washington, D.C.: American Society of Information Science, 1975. 476p. \$27.50. (LC 66-25096) (ISBN 0-87715-210-1)

Writing a review of the eleven separate articles contained in this volume has proved a very difficult assignment. On the one hand, the pretensions of the field are very high. One is impressed by the thoroughness of the work the individual authors have done in assembling and describing 1,505 publications in the field and producing an index that is over fifty pages long. On the other hand, after one has waded through it all, one feels having heard considerable fancy but essentially empty talk.

It is too bad that the *Annual Review* has not seen fit to update its coverage of one of the real advances in information science and computer technology; namely, data base management systems (last covered in

volume 7). Its coverage of other important advances, such as data storage devices, data input devices, and data output devices is very scattered. Instead, in this volume we are given an entire review devoted to mini-computers. Unfortunately, the discussion of these machines is hopelessly naive; and the examples given represent more the dreams of some computer salesman than a review of "information science."

The review entitled "Library Automation" suffers from the opposite problem; namely, it lists item after item with little or no comment as to the significance or meaning of each. The review by Peter B. Schipma, "Generation and Uses of Machine-Readable Data Bases," is, by contrast, excellent. He discusses standardization, software, organizational relationships to data bases, etc., all from a knowledgeable well-thought-out point of view. A recurrent theme in his article is the cost effectiveness of such systems, and he emphasizes that this subject is "the area of great vacuum in the literature."

The article by Seldon W. Terrant, "The Computer and Publishing," is also excellent. The author reviews carefully the actual steps being slowly taken by the industry so that "many of the long promised capabilities have materialized." The chapter by Donald A. Dunn, "Communications Technology," is very useful because of its balanced and thorough approach. His account of AT&T's attempts to keep prices high and others out of the communication business as well as the description of two new areas in communications (digital data transmission and packet switching) should be read by anyone who is or plans to be part of a computer network. The review by Ben H. Weil on "Copyright Developments" is also quite good at relating the developments of the judicial and legislative process with those of technology.

Three separate reviews address the non-technological aspects of information science, that is, getting all participants in the field together to figure out what they should be doing. One article, "Bibliographic Standards," provides a good account of the organizations that supposedly set standards and how they interrelate. Another review, "National Planning of Information Services," anticipates a good deal of growth